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ABSTRACT

The readings and activities in this 5-day unit for 4th and 5th grade classes are designed to introduce students to Amish culture in America. A total of five lessons are outlined in which students discuss Amish family life, role play Amish celebrations, make basic products such as bread and soap, and examine Amish customs and occupations. A true/false and multiple choice exercise evaluates student comprehension. Recipes for making soap and bread, and a bibliography are included. The document is one of a series of materials from the Iowa Area Education Agency 7 Teacher Center Project. (LP)

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# THE AMISH

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AMISH UNIT

Level - 4th or 5th grade

5 day unit

General Objectives:

1. The class will be informed that there is an Amish culture.
2. The students will explore the Amish society and compare it to ours.
3. The students will understand the roles of the Amish family.
4. The students will have some understanding of the roles within the Amish community.
5. The students will compare the way the Amish celebrate births, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and holidays, and holidays to our culture's celebrations.
6. The students will experience bread making as the Amish make bread.
7. The students will become aware that even the most basic needs such as soap, are made by the Amish.
8. The students will know and recognize what kinds of clothing the Amish wear.
9. The students will have an understanding of the occupations in the Amish community.
10. The students will realize the closeness of the community.
11. The students will realize that the Amish do interact with the outside community in ways such as buying things they cannot make themselves, and the use of professionals such as doctors and dentists.
12. The students will learn more about the Amish on their own through the reading corner.

Activities to be Covered:

1. Bread making
2. Soap making
3. Role playing
4. Read story

LESSON I - INTRODUCTION TO AMISH UNIT

Discussion:

1. Have you ever heard of the Amish?
2. Do any Amish live around here?
3. Have you ever seen an Amish child?
4. Why don't we have Amish children in our classroom?

Next discuss the books listed at the end of the unit. These books or similar ones should be placed in a reading corner. Discuss important objectives the students should look for when reading.

A Suggested Activity:

Write a book report.

Use encyclopedias, etc. to find information on the Amish.

LESSON II - This day will consist of a discussion of Amish Family Life.

Read:

Of all the Anabaptist sects, only the Old Order Amish have vigorously held on to the traditional German customs and cultures in the face of all the pressures trying to assimulate them into the modern world.

Each member in the family has a certain role. For example, the mother's role is mainly centered around the house. The girls help their mother cook, clean and sew. Son's roles are mainly centered around their father in the field. They rise in the morning with their fathers and work with them all day. The family is very close and very strict.

LESSON III - CELEBRATIONS: BIRTHS, BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS, FUNERALS AND HOLIDAYS

Read:

Most Amish women are usually mothers by the end of the first year of marriage. Amish babies are born under doctor supervision, which is not against their customs. The children are not baptized until they are teenagers and are excused for behavior against the church until they are baptized. An Amish wedding is a big social event. Marriage keeps the faith going strong. The courtship is done in secret. The engagement is not announced until two weeks before the wedding. The wedding is a community affair with people coming from all over.

Holidays are celebrated, but the Amish do not recognize holidays such as the 4th of July or Veterans Day.

Funerals are held the third day after the death and the body is placed in a plain wooden box made by the carpenter.

Activity: Role Playing

The class will be broken up into groups and each group will be given a card with a situation on it. The situation will have to be completed by the group with how they think the people would respond.

LESSON IV - MAKE BREAD AND DISCUSS FOOD PREPARATION

As a class we will make bread according to the recipe taken from an Amish cookbook. (A recipe for bread is included in this unit.) All Amish food is homemade. They don't go off to McDonald's or to the grocery store for quick foods. Although when they do go to town shopping they go to restaurants and eat.

Soapmaking can be substituted for bread. A recipe for soap is included in this unit.

LESSON V - CLOTHING AND OCCUPATIONS OF THE AMISH

Read:

The Amish are required to dress a certain way. Men must wear beards after they are married. Women change their dress after they are married. Amish wear no buttons or anything ornamental on their clothing. Almost all of the clothing is homemade, with the exception that men are now starting to buy jeans in stores. These jeans are standard jeans and are not fancy.

The Amish are thought to be the hardest and most reliable workers around. This is because of their strict upbringing. Most Amish men work for themselves as farmers or as carpenters, cinder-block layers, or sawmill operators for their community.

Since the Amish have such a good reputation as dependable workers, many non-Amish people will hire them for work. Depending on the order of Amish, this is allowed. Some orders will go as far as allowing the non-Amish to train their children to drive tractors. Some Amish will have nothing to do with the non-Amish.

The Amish are set apart from the non-Amish society, but they do interact with them in town and on their own land. The Amish attend many farm auctions and sales, they pay taxes in the city, and visit doctors only if necessary. They don't shop in town because they make most of the things they need themselves. The Amish have few visitors but when they do the visitors are seldom turned away.

Today times are changing and the relationship of the Amish is becoming closer to the city. In some cases you may see farm equipment on an Amish farm or maybe a telephone wire. Everything changes, even the plain living of the Amish.

The Amish have their own schools and teachers although they recognize the fact that their retarded population needs extra help and are sending them to special schools.

In music the Amish have their own hymns and music they sing.

Amish recreation and games are similar to ours, but it could be pointed out that only certain games of ours are played by Amish children.

## EVALUATION QUESTIONS

TRUE or FALSE — Circle the correct letter.

T F 1. An Amish wedding is announced six months in advance.

T F 2. Most weddings are held in the summer.

T F 3. Children are not baptized until they are willing to join the church.

T F 4. Amish students are taught by Amish teachers.

T F 5. Some think Amish are the most reliable workers.

T F 6. There are many occupations in the Amish community. Being a farmer is a secondary skill.

T F 7. When a disaster strikes one Amish family, everyone in the community helps out.

T F 8. The Amish are changing some, and today most Amish have a car.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Amish homes are furnished _____.
   a. elaborately b. simply c. cluttered d. expensively

2. The Amish usually _____.
   a. grow and process their own food b. buy food from stores in town
   c. grow food cooperatively with neighbors

3. When are the Amish men required to wear a beard? _____
   a. at 16 years of age b. at 21 years of age c. after they are baptized
   d. after they are married

4. Most Amish babies are born _____.
   a. in their own home b. in the hospiatal c. at a friend's house
   d. none of the above

5. An Amish funeral _____.
   a. is held in the nearest town b. is held in school c. is just between the family d. is a community affair

6. The Amish live _____.
   a. in town with non-Amish b. in the suburbs of a big city c. where ever they want d. outside a town, developing their own Amish community

7. When non-Amish people visit an Amish farm _____.
   a. they are treated as one of themselves b. they will have the door slammed in their face c. the Amish will willingly pose for pictures
   d. the Amish will push their beliefs on you

8. Origins of the Amish are with _____.
   a. the Mennonite church b. the Catholic church c. Hinduism
   d. the Baptist church

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## WHITE BREAD

1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup shortening
Cream and add three cups lukewarm water

Dissolve one large cake of yeast in 1/2 cup warm water.
Mix 1 1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ginger
9 cups flour

Make into loaves, buns or biscuits.

## HOMEMADE SOAP

In earthen crock:

Dissolve 2 cans Lewis Lye in 2 quarts cold water. Cool. Use wooden spoon or stick.

Add 4 tablespoons Borax

Melt to lukewarm, 16 cups lard. Then pour into lye mixture and add 1 cup ammonia.

Stir frequently until thickened.

Pour into clothlined peach box. Cit before it gets too hard.

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